

News Release

Farm Service Agency
Public Affairs Staff

1400 Independence Ave. SW
Stop 0506
Washington, DC 20250-0506

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Steve Thompson (202) 720-7961
Steve_Thompson@wdc.fsa.usda.gov

USDA ANNOUNCES COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION LENDING RATES FOR DECEMBER 1997

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1997 -- The interest rate for 1995 and prior crop year commodity loans disbursed by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation during December 1997, is 5.5 percent, unchanged from the November 1997 rate. For 1996 crop year commodity loans, the interest rate is 6.5 percent for loans disbursed during December 1997, unchanged from the rate for November 1997.

Past monthly releases announcing interest rates charged by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation on commodity loans disbursed for that particular month reflected the interest rate charged the CCC by the U.S. Treasury for that month. This was the interest rate specified by the CCC since January 1, 1982, but the process of establishing the interest rate was changed by a provision of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, enacted on April 4, 1996.

Section 163 of the Act requires that monthly interest rates applicable to commodity loans are to be 100 basis points -- or, 1 percent -- greater than the rate determined under the applicable interest rate formula in effect on October 1, 1995. This formula resulted in a rate equivalent to the amount the U.S. Treasury charged the CCC for borrowing for the month.

The provisions of Section 163 are not retroactive. Accordingly, this and subsequent monthly interest rate announcements will carry two sets of rates: one for 1995 and prior crop year loans and one for 1996 crop year loans.

Further program information is available from James Little (703) 305-1386, E-mail jlittle@wdc.fsa.usda.gov

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